THE BIG SISTER MOVEMENT GROWS

Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt Reported to Have Given Association $500,000.

HELP IN CHILDREN'S COURT

More Members Needed Because Work Is Done by Personal Effort and Influence.

WHO are the Big Sisters, and what they do, is a question which many persons were stirred to ask by the recent report that Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt had given a half million dollars to the association. A partial answer to the question is supplied by the fact that upon its publication Mrs. Vanderbilt expressed her regret at the circulation of such a report on the ground that it might have the effect of deterring others from making gifts to the Big Sisters and from giving the movement their active personal assistance, which is one kind of help it seeks to enlist. A fuller answer to the question is given by an account of the work and aims of the Big Sisters. Thus:

"A complaint by the society," calls the clerk as he lays the papers before Justice Mayo, sitting in the Children's Court. The mantle of black accentuates the silvering hair of this childwise, patient judge, on whose fatherly face a confidence begetting smile plays triumphantly against the old familiar court frown, and in whose kindly eyes may be read a promise of prudent mercy.

Comes a movement after the pause, and out from the dense gathering of youthful delinquents awaiting their turn advances a woman probation officer. With her is a girl, who in appearance seems not above 13 years, but whose record gives her age as 15. Heavy of tread she climbs the steps to the rough worn "Stage of Tears" before the bar. Her head is bare, her hair dishevelled, and across her pinched face a straying wisp falls unkempt, unheeded. For a second she lifts her head and glances furtively at the Judge; then drops her eyes, indifferent, her fingers clasped, immobile.

"Good morning, Dorothy!" Having discovered her name in the title of the papers, the Justice greets her in a tone of assurance and encouragement. Then

AN OCCASIONAL MOTOR TRIP.

unfolding the document he notes the burden of the complaint. There is a striking change in his expression as he again looks across the bar to the girl standing sullen and silent before him.

"It grieves me very much, Dorothy, to see you here again." There is more of regret than reproof in the quiet, even tones.

"And she is on parole now, your Honor," interposes the probation officer at her side. "Her mother complains that she can do nothing more with her. She is wayward in spite of kindly treatment at home. This time she was out all night for three nights in succession; and she will not give an account of herself."

"And God only knows where you were, or what you were doing those three nights!" The Judge looked searchingly into her stolid face; she returns his look uncompromising.

"I am sorry for you, Dorothy." The firm lines that settle about the Judge's eyes in no way conceal the pity he feels. "You were given a chance to go home and be good, my girl. But you would not stay home as you should, and it seems you will not be good.

"I would a million times rather send you home than to an institution." He is leaning far over the bar now, intently studying her face. "Home is where you and every other young girl should be, and particularly at night. But your mother says she cannot keep you there. An institutional life might teach you more of the things you should not know and of which you probably already know too much. Your case and every similar one is distressing.

"Please, your Honor, we will take care of this girl." There is a note of cheer in the voice and it sounds a definite promise of sisterly oversight and protection. The Justice with pleased expression turns to find in the place of the probation officer a tall, trim young woman, her face lighted with a smile. For the first time the girl is diverted from her attitude of indifference. She, too, turns to the new speaker beside her, inquiry and awakened interest in her flushed face.

"Good morning, Mrs. Evans! I am glad you are here." There is a tone of relief in the Judge's greeting. "Do I understand that you will assume charge of this girl and that you will take her to the home of your society out at Little Neck, Long Island?"

"Yes, your Honor, we will," and still smiling, she lays her arm assuringly about the shoulders of the unfortunate. "It will tax our accommodations, but it seems the best thing that can be done for this girl and her family. Commitment to an institution at her stage would probably tend to aggravate conditions, rather than make for betterment."

"I agree with you," assents the Judge, making a note of the disposition of the case across the complaint. "It will be well for her if she consents to accept the opportunity you are offering her to be a good girl. I wish you success in accomplishing good results in her case. The girl is committed to your care."

"Next case!" cries the clerk, and the girl steps down, her custodian's arm still about her shoulders as they pass beyond the rail.

"This girl is a Protestant," says Justice Mayo in a whispered aside to a friend, "and so she would not fall to the care of any of the various homes of Catholic or Hebrew charity, both of which are constantly represented in this court."

"And this lady?" She seemed worth knowing more about.

"That is Mrs. Madeline W. Evans," replies the Justice. "She is the secretary of the society known as the Big Sisters. Their organization was not incorporated until a short time ago, although as individuals their Good Samaritan influence has been felt in this court for several years.

"It is within their province to care for the unfortunate Protestant girls who come before the court, and who offer some promise of reclamation. And I believe that the majority of these girls, with proper encouragement and assistance, moral, mental and material, may be redeemed to society. The uplifting influence of the Big Sisters has already proved a great blessing to girls of this class.

"They are gradually extending their field of humanitarian endeavor and are certain to accomplish as great good among wayward girls as the Big Brothers have achieved in the last eight years among unfortunate and unruly boys. There was pressing need of such a society as the Big Sisters to care for the interests of the Protestant girls brought before this court, and they are meeting that need in a splendid way."

"Although the Big Sisters were only recently incorporated," explained Mrs. Evans when finallly she consented to talk of the movement, "a concerted movement for the relief and rescue of these unfortunate girls has been quietly carried on by the society, as individuals, for about a year. The results were so uniformly satisfactory that those interested were encouraged to combine in an organization somewhat similar to the Big Brothers movement, inaugurated by Ernest K. Coulter, for many years clerk of the Children's Court. Our plan of reclamation and reformation, however, is conducted along much different lines.

"Credit is directly due to Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt," continued Mrs. Evans, "for the inception and the organization of the Big Sisters. After studying the conditions prevailing in most of the cases of young girls brought before the Children's Court, she was among the first to interest herself personally in behalf of these unfortunates.

"During her two years of preliminary investigations she reached the conclusion that it was a work which could best be done in an individual way rather than by a society as such. She had proved beyond doubt that the personal equation is the most important factor in accomplishing the original purpose, that of helping those too weak in moral stamina to help themselves or those, in the great majority, who are victims of their environment.

"In keeping with her idea of individualism in the undertaking she enlisted the services of her two sisters, Mrs. T. C. Havemeyer and Mrs. Stephen H. Olin, and later a number of her friends joined her. The names of all of these pioneers in the little girl's welfare cause are among the incorporators of the present day organization."

Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt is the president of the Big Sisters organization. Mrs. Willard Parker, Jr., is the treasurer. Mrs. Willard D. Straight, Mrs. William May Wright and Mrs. Lewis S. Morris are the members of the executive committee, and Mrs. Madeline W. Evans, as secretary, is the personal representative of the society at the bar of the Children's Court. While there were only about fifty original members of the Big Sisters the work has had such a compelling appeal to those who have become acquainted with it that at present there are more than one hundred active members.

Mrs. Evans declares, however, that there is a real and pressing need at this moment for at least three hundred members. The society solicits and will welcome to membership such women as are qualified for and interested in the work. The offices of the Big Sisters are at 200 Fifth avenue, where the records show that many of the members are looking after and caring for three and four girls each, although it was originally intended to place only one or at most two girls in charge of each Big Sister.

Even though there were enough active members to reduce this apportionment of girls to one each it would still be desirable to have a waiting list of at least two hundred and preferably three hundred. Now that the movement is well under way and its value has been thoroughly established the demands upon the society are not met with an adequate increase in membership. The Big Sisters are mostly women of wealth and socially prominent. The hope is expressed that when others learn the need of new recruits to carry on this cause they will come forward and volunteer their services.

Under the present system the interests of the Protestant girls brought before the Children's Court are looked after by Mrs. Edwards. She is in court every day that a prospective charge is to be arraigned, keeping in daily touch with such cases through the Children's society.

When the case is one of destitution the financial aid of the society is extended. One of the purposes of the society being to help those who are able to help themselves, employment is found for those old enough to work, preferably in some good home. If the case is one of ill treatment by parents an effort is made to place the girl with some good family that will treat her more or less as one of its members. It is a case of juvenile delinquency one of the Big Sisters looks after the girl in her own home, where she is visited at frequent intervals. Books are furnished her to read, suitable work is provided for her to do and now and again she is taken by the Big Sister to see some good play or other entertainment, varied by an occasional motor trip through the parks, to the country or the seashore. In fact every effort is made to give her encouragement to keep on her good behavior.

In the case of the wayward girl gone wrong, and a regrettable number are of this nature, different methods are adopted. Where it seems advisable, especially in instances of first offenders, the girl is paroled to her home under the care of her parents, the oversight of the probation officer and the guardianship of the Big Sister assigned to look after her welfare.

Since the majority of these cases, however, are found to be the direct result of home environments, this method is not always practicable. Unless the parents are able and willing to cooperate with the Big Sister, the girl gen-

VISITING HER IN HER HOME.

erally finds her way back to the bar of the Children's Court, charged with a second offence. In the greater number of instances it has been found best to remove the girl from her home surroundings for a time at least.

To provide a comfortable home for such girls during their detention by the society Mrs. Vanderbilt gave a cottage at Little Neck, L. I., which was completely furnished by Thatcher Adams. But this cottage was entirely destroyed by fire last August and until some one shall donate another building a temporary home is being provided at a house in the neighborhood. Here the girls are taught to keep house, to cook, to wash and iron, to knit and sew, while surrounded by a healthful atmosphere and provided with clean, girlish amusements.

The girls taken to the home are kept thus secluded for two weeks or longer, principally to get them away from their old associates and environments, and to keep them free from the temptations of the city. Where the girl has respectable parents and a good home, the purpose is more to keep her out of sight until her parents can move to a different and preferably, a distant locality, where no one is acquainted with her misfortune, when she can go to her new home without the fear of being taunted by her old associates.

Here again, when she is returned to her new home and enters her new surroundings, the Big Sisters still remain as her guardian. The aim now is to protect her against temptation. It is at this point that the Big Sisters find their most responsible trust and meet the greatest difficulties.

It is a part of the duties of the Big Sister in charge of such a girl to see that she associates with cleanminded boys and girls of her own age, and that her general surroundings are acceptable. The Big Sister keeps close watch over her in her school, social and home life. At the proper time the girl is taken by the Big Sister to her church and placed in a Sunday school class. And just here quite often she meets her greatest handicap. Although the girl is cautioned not to talk of her past or to divulge the circumstances that brought her within the guardianship of the Big Sisters, nevertheless the facts very often become known in one way or another.

"Then it is," according to a statement made by one of the Big Sisters, "that the little girls of her Sunday school class will turn up their noses at her, ostracize her and say all manner of bitter, insulting things to her, because of the fact that she has been before the Children's Court."

DROVE OF SEAHORSES.

The Aquarium received 104 seahorses from three to five inches in length in a single lot lately from Atlantic City, where they were gathered from the leading nets of pound nets there set up.

These leads, as they are called, are single lines of netting set vertically in the water, supported on stakes, and extending it may be three, four or five hundred feet out from the pound net. Fish ranging the coast and striking these leads follow them along seeking a way through, to bring up finally in the pound.

But the seahorse, one of the most striking of all sea creatures, with a head and body that bear a striking resemblance to the head and neck of a horse, and a tapering and prehensile tail, does not go with the big fishes into the pound. When a wave rolls in from the sea the seahorses, if they are near it, wrap their clinging tail around a strand of the lead net and hang on. In gathering seahorses under such conditions the collector goes along the lead in a small boat, lifting the net up from the water and picking off such seahorses as he may find. In this manner this big drove of seahorses lately arrived at the Aquarium was gathered.

At Atlantic City visitors buy seahorses as in Florida they buy little alligators; but the seahorse cannot be kept alive for any great length of time except in circulating tanks in which there is a constant inflow of new water with its oxygen content as the old water flows out.

The seahorse is found along the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to South Carolina. On this coast it grows to be six or seven inches in length, but on the Pacific coast it attains a length of twelve inches. Seahorses have often been taken in the waters of New York bay and of the Hudson River; hereabout they have this year been more plentiful than in previous recent seasons.

Beating the "Gun Toters."

From the Macon Telegraph.

The Clarke county Grand Jury recommends that the Georgia Legislature forbid the manufacture or sale of pistols with barrels less than sixteen inches in length. Nothing could be so effective as a means of preventing the carrying of concealed weapons.

CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF NEW YEAR

People of New Zealand Will Be the First to Give Greeting.

COMPLEX CALENDAR PLAN

Ordinary Person Altogether Mixed Up in Trying to Comprehend the Calculation.

THE birth of the new year, as New Yorkers are well aware, is variously celebrated, but how many people know of the manner in which that momentous date is set? Do you realize that the new year is really hours old before the great bulk of the civilized world is able to celebrate its arrival?

Priority in rejoicing over the event is actually given to the untutored inhabitants of the islands of the South Pacific. The first of the civilized world that will greet 1913 will be the people of far away New Zealand. Sweeping westward, the change of date crosses Asia and then the Old World of Europe and Africa before starting over the Atlantic to America. Onward it speeds at the rate of a thousand miles an hour until the first day of the new year dies away in the middle of the Pacific.

In the United States the idea of announcing broadcast over the land the birth of the new year originated with the officers in charge of the Naval Observatory in Washington. Ten years ago it was sugested that the telegraph companies despatch at midnight from Washington a series of signals proclaiming the exact moment of the new year's beginning. The idea was taken up and signals were sent out at midnight and at 1, 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning following in order that each great time division of the United States should receive its own appropriate midnight signal from the capital.

The practice has now become fixed. The signals used are akin to those sent out each midday. These begin five minutes before the midnight hour by way of warning, and cover each second of the clock except the twenty-ninth, the last five of each of the first four minutes, and the last ten of the final minute. After this last long break there is a single prolonged contact, the beginning of which announces the exact instant of the arrival of the new year.

Since the beginning of this service other telegraph and most of the cable companies have lent their cooperation, and signals are now sent covering both North and South America, all our colonial possessions, Australia, Japan and the principal nations of Europe. Some idea of the speed with which these New Year's greetings are flashed from Washington to distant points can be gathered from the fact that it takes less than 0.4 of a second to reach the Manila Observatory; 0.5 of a second to reach Lick Observatory, California; 2.25 seconds to cover the distance between Washington and the coast survey station in Alaska—this includes relaying, and 4 seconds to let the Wellington Observatory in New Zealand know that the new year has reached us after the celebration there has been hours old.

Quite apart from sending greetings thus to the four corners of the globe the New Year time service has brought a keener appreciation of the value of a common standard. In Europe at the present time the traveller has still to reckon with different standards. In fact the condition over there is very much like what it was here until the United States was cut up into its present time divisions.

As has been said, the day is born in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and perhaps you want to know why the 180th meridian from Greenwich, England, was chosen to be the birthplace for the civil and the astronomical day. The answer is: "To avoid or to lessen the chance of international complications over the question of the day of the week."

Time, as man knows it in various remote parts of the globe was originally carried there by the early navigators, and variances of date followed, depending upon whether the seafarers arrived there from the east or from the west. If you take an atlas you will find the international date line to be irregular. It zigzags east and west of the true 180th meridian, and this records the surviving influence of those ancient sailors. It also shows how tenaciously some European nations, because of their long gone pioneers of the sea, still hold to their own meridians for the determining of their midnight or their noon.

The use of the meridian of Ferro, passing near the largest of the Canary Islands, was adopted by Ptolemy in the second century of the Christian era because those islands were then the westernmost land known and that imaginary line divided the eastern and the western hemispheres of that period. The meridian of Ferro is something over seventeen degrees west of Greenwich, and on that account makes a difference of more than an hour from the English standard. In the days of the early navigators and even down to the seventeenth century this meridian of Ferro was generally used. In 1634 the zero meridian was placed at Paris and the Greenwich prime meridian followed several years afterward. Here was the beginning of the confusion.

When the Portuguese set out upon their voyage of discovery they sailed to the eastward by going down and around the southern end of Africa. When they reached the Philippines they called them the Islands of the Orient. When the Spaniards arrived there, having sailed in the opposite direction and around the lower end of South America, they called the Philippines the Islands of the West.

These pioneer circumnavigators did not realize the need of altering their dates on crossing the 180th meridian; so it came to pass that Hongkong and Manila until 1845 called the same day Saturday and Sunday. The last day of December, 1844, was omitted by common consent on the part of these two cities and the 31st of December became the first day of January, 1845.

For reasons of state the Philippines up to that time had carried an easterly date because their Portuguese discoverers had reached them from that direction. A similar condition existed here upon our own continent until we acquired Alaska. The Russian explorers of Alaska, reaching there from the west, carried with them western time, while our own people approached that side of the continent from the east, bringing the slower or delayed date. In other words we were running away from the sun, which marked the birth of each day. For a great many years the islands of the Pacific had a variety of dates, though often separated but a short distance, their original foreign colonists being responsible for this confusion.

Why the date changes upon passing the 118th meridian is not ordinarily understood by the layman any more than the need of it was realized by the early seafarer. Travelling west the day changes as soon as that meridian is past, while coming east the old day remains. Let us understand this.

The earth turns to the eastward at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, broadly stated. A ship travelling toward the east goes through space at a speed of a thousand miles an hour plus its own velocity. An ocean liner speeding along at twenty knots an hour covers 480 knots a day, and when she has thus run a thousand miles eastward she will have overreached the local time of her position by one full hour. If she were running to the westward the condition would be reversed.

Upon reaching the 118th meridian, no matter what time of the day the clock may mark or how much of that day be apparently spent—let us assume she is twelve hours ahead of local time—then the vessel's log will actually continue the day twelve hours more. This will make that day one of thirty-six hours in order to give local time a chance to catch up, so to speak. In this way there may be two holidays, two Sundays or two days of any date in succession, one of them being as long only as the ship's time has overrun the local time. Again, this state of affairs is reversed when the ship is travelling toward the west.

The early navigators did not take this fact into consideration. Each of them went on his way quite satisfied with the markings of his clock, possibly set weeks or months before at his last home port. Sailing by uncertain winds, through waters swept by insidious currents and travelling for month after month, it is a marvel that the dates were not even more mistaken then.

But these are not the only curious things about timekeeping. Even now we have three ways of reckoning our days. We have an astronomical day, a civil day and a nautical day. The civil day is born at midnight; the nautical day ends at noon of that civil day, and the astronomical day begins at noon of the civil day. The public need not bother about the astronomical day, but the nautical one figures importantly in seafaring life and had much to do with the dates given by the old navigators.

It is thus plain that any single date may in this way be a part of two distinct days, provided we are reckoning with the nautical and the civil days of a given name or monthly number. If we include astronomical reckoning one day may be partly in three days. Take for example Wednesday, the 1st of January, 1913. By astronomical and nautical reckonings one-half of this date in each case is on Wednesday. The first half of the 1st of January by the nautical division is in Tuesday, the 31st of December, while the second half of the first day of the new year, agreeably to the astronomical day, is in Thursday, the 2d of January, by civil time. This is rather puzzling, isn't it?

Because of all of this confusion it was proposed back in 1884 at an international conference composed of representatives from twenty-five other countries and held in Washington to abolish both the astronomical and nautical days and to substitute in their stead the civil day beginning at midnight. It was further proposed that the meridian of Greenwich should be universally accepted as the prime meridian.

The Governments of all but three of the countries expressed approval: two of these remained silent, and we receded from our own proposol. The reason for our refusal quite likely lay in the fact that the "Nautical Almanac" and the "American Ephemeris" are supposed to be published three years in advance of their date; the abolition of the nautical and the astronomical day would have upset the extensive calculations involved in this work. The late Prof. Simon Newcomb was then the director of the "Nautical Almanac." With all his genius that remarkable man could not view the project from an international standpoint. His idea of the proposition he expressed in this manner:

"A capital plan for use during the millennium. Too perfect for the present state of humanity. See no more reason for considering Europe in this matter than for considering the inhabitants of the planet Mars."

Prof. Newcomb did not foresee the coming of wireless telegraphy, and the day of the proposed universal standard is well nigh here because of the ever widening reach of this means of distant communication.

People who take but little notice of the minutes, and all too often even the hours, cannot appreciate the exquisite exactness with which the Government tries to mark the passing of each second of time. The clocks in the Naval Observatory are marvels of accuracy, and no pains are spared to keep them so the year through.

The standard timepiece employed is a Kessels clock of wonderful workmanship and susceptible of extremely delicate adjustment. This clock marks mean time, which is the division of the day into hours, minutes and seconds employed for the ordinary functions of life. The regulation of thic clock is so exquisite that its daily "rate," that is, gain or loss, has been reduced to a constant value of variation which is well nigh zero.

This timepiece cannot be connected electrically for chronometric service, so it is compared daily by means of a sidereal sounder and checked by the coincidence of its beats with the latter. As the beats of the Kessels clock are wholly inaudible to the unaided ear, a microphone is used which magnifies the otherwise noiseless beat.

Remember some of these things when the present year dies and the new one is born and realize how much closer the world will be bound by a common impulse despite the babel of tongues when wireless unites all lands by a single standard.